

# 6

## Parks and Recreation

San Ramon is committed to creating and maintaining a park system that meets citizens' recreational needs and contributes to the City's positive image. The presence of well-designed parks and community facilities is essential to the health and well-being of a community. Parks and community facilities in San Ramon have improved and are striving to achieve the ideal envisioned by the City and its citizens.

### 6.1 PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

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The primary guiding tool is the Parks and Community Services Master Plan developed by the Parks and Community Services Commission. It is a blueprint that guides park and community service development until 2006 and, in conjunction with the General Plan, acts as a guidance tool to City Council, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Community Service Commission, and the public. The Master Plan outlines guiding and implementing policies for parks, facility and program development, and operations, and aims to address the needs of residents as the community grows and changes.

The City's current standard for functional public parkland is 6.5 acres per 1,000 residents, comprised of 4.5 acres of neighborhood parks (those serving residents living within a half mile radius) and two acres of community parks (those serving residents within a three-mile radius). This standard is

achievable under the 2020 General Plan if the City is successful in securing the proposed public parkland.

Since incorporation, the City has successfully pursued an ambitious program of park development. Neighborhood parks at school sites, expansions of San Ramon Central Park, parks established in new subdivisions, and preservation of significant creek corridors have been included in this program. Providing for parks and recreation services in San Ramon and its Sphere of Influence falls within the jurisdiction of the City, as well as several local, regional, and state agencies, private businesses, local homeowners' associations, and numerous special interest organizations.

### 6.2 CLASSIFICATION AND STANDARDS

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The City provides its residents with several types of parks and facilities. Parks are defined as land owned or leased by the City and used for public recreational purposes. Parks in San Ramon are classified below.

- ***Neighborhood Park:*** A park or playground at least two acres in size, developed primarily to serve the recreational needs of citizens living within a half mile radius of the park. The City's standard for neighborhood parks is 4.5 acres per 1,000 residents.
- ***School Park:*** A neighborhood park developed, improved, and maintained on school grounds by the City. School parks are utilized jointly by students and by residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. Since school parks are only available for use by the general public during non-school hours, only half of the total acreage is applied to the neighborhood park standard.

- **Community Park:** A larger park or facility developed to meet the park and recreational needs of those living or working within a three-mile radius. Community parks vary from 10 to 60 acres. The standard for this type of park is 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents of the City.
- **Regional Park:** A park having a wide range of improvements not usually found in neighborhood and community parks and designed to meet the recreational needs of the entire regional population. A regional park must be over 200 acres in size, including both land and water bodies and should be within 30 minute driving time from the residents it serves. Recreational facilities, confined to a Recreation Staging Area, must not occupy more than 30 percent of the park's area, leaving 70 percent of the park's area to remain in its natural state. Recreational facilities might include a golf course, a zoo, a nature area, and/or hiking or equestrian trails. Some of these facilities may be under lease to community groups.
- **Specialized Recreation Area:** A recreation area or facility devoted to a very specific activity or use. A linear park, more commonly referred to as a trail, is one example, as are swimming pools and tennis courts.

The above listed parks generally require primarily flat land (functional acreage) that can be developed into sports fields, tennis courts, picnic areas and children's play areas. Any sloped terrain proposed for parkland must be deemed suitable for additional recreational amenities that adequately serve the community.

### 6.3 DOUGHERTY VALLEY

Standards for future park development in the Dougherty Valley have been outlined in the Dougherty Valley Specific Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding between Contra Costa County, the City of San Ramon, Shapell Industries of Northern California, and Windemere Ranch Partners Relating to the Development of the Dougherty Valley ("Settlement Agreement").

**Table 6.3-1: Proposed Parks and Open Space in Dougherty Valley**

<i>Park Type/Facility</i>	<i>Acres</i>
<b>Parks</b>	
Community Parks (1)	72
Neighborhood Parks (8)	40-80
Neighborhood Parks at School Sites (7)	55
Pocket Parks (12)/Tot Lots (variable)	12-48
Creek Corridors	217
Staging Areas (2)	6-9
<b>Total Parkland</b>	<b>402-481</b>
<b>Open Space</b>	
Unimproved Open Space	2,093
Improved Open Space	311
<b>Total Open Space</b>	<b>2,404</b>
<b>Total Parkland and Open Space</b>	<b>2,806-2,885</b>
<b>Other Parks and Recreation Facilities</b>	
Community Center (1)	<1
Library (1)	<1
Senior Center (1)	<1

Source: Dougherty Valley Specific Plan, 1996.

The Settlement Agreement provides that the developers shall “exceed the (County) General Plan’s growth management goals for neighborhood parks and overall, provide parks at a rate of 6.5 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 population and that they will have a balance of active and passive uses within those parklands.”

As shown in Table 6.3-1, the Dougherty Valley development as approved by Contra Costa County will include 12 pocket parks of one to four acres each, eight neighborhood parks of five to ten acres each, seven school parks totaling 55 acres, and one community park of approximately 72 acres, for a total of up to 255 acres of developed parkland. A community center, library, and senior center will also be provided.

#### 6.4 PUBLIC/PRIVATE RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is the primary provider of regional park space and activities in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. EBRPD is responsible for recreational development and maintenance of regional parks, preserves, and trails. In San Ramon, the Iron Horse Trail, Bishop Ranch Open Space, Little Hills Ranch Recreation Area, and Las Trampas Regional Wilderness are all EBRPD parklands. The EBRPD is committed to coordinating jointly managed regional trails with local communities such as San Ramon.

Other trails proposed in the Planning Area will exist along the western edge, along Dougherty Road, in Tassajara Valley, within the Eastside Specific Plan, the Northwest Specific Plan, and Bollinger Canyon subarea. Both the City and EBRPD are committed to providing trails, parks, and open space in San

Ramon. The trail system is portrayed in the General Plan Diagram in the Land Use Element.

Table 6.4-1 provides an inventory of the public and private recreational areas within the City. There are five categories: developed parks and related facilities, City-owned undeveloped parkland, future parkland development, East Bay Regional Park District facilities, and existing private facilities. Figure 6-1 illustrates existing parkland in San Ramon.

**Table 6.4-1: Existing Parks and Undeveloped Parkland**

<i>Park Type</i>	<i>Acres</i>
<b>Community Parks</b>	
Existing (2)	76.0
Under Construction (1)	16.0
<i>Community Parks Subtotal</i>	92.0
<b>Neighborhood Parks<sup>1</sup></b>	
Existing (13)	67.5
Under Construction (4)	18.7
<i>Neighborhood Parks Subtotal</i>	86.2
<b>Specialized Recreation Areas</b>	
Existing (3)	18.0
Under Construction (2)	17.0
<i>Specialized Recreation Areas Subtotal</i>	35.0
<i>Total Existing</i>	161.5
<i>Total Under Construction</i>	51.7
<b>Total Undeveloped</b>	<b>38.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>251.7</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes school sites and pocket parks.

Source: City of San Ramon Parks and Community Services Department, 2001

San Ramon has over 250 acres of existing parkland and parkland under construction. An additional 40 acres of City-owned parkland is undeveloped. This includes Athey Lot (3 acres), Henry Ranch Park (18 acres), Old Ranch Park North (13 acres), and San Catanio Creek Park (4.5 acres). The City's Parks and Community Services Department estimates the current ratio of park acreage per 1,000 residents to be 5.4.

## 6.5 20-YEAR NEEDS AND PLANNED PARKS

With the additional parkland in Dougherty Valley, a specialized recreation area in Big Canyon on the Westside and the planned park and school in the Northwest Specific Plan area, the total of existing and planned parkland will be about 670 acres, as shown in Table 6.5-1.

**Table 6.5-1: San Ramon Parks - Proposed and Need to 2020**

	Acres
Existing and Undeveloped Parks	251.7
Proposed Parks	
Dougherty Valley	280.0
Faria	17.0
Other (e.g. Big Canyon)	123.5
<i>Total Existing and Proposed Parks</i>	<i>672.2</i>
Park Need (based on 6.5 acres/1,000 residents)	620.0
Ratio Achieved at Buildout (acres/1,000 residents)	7.0
Additional Acreage Provided by the General Plan	52.2

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2001.

A planned buildout population of 96,020 will result in a future need of about 620 acres at 6.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The General Plan proposes 52 acres more than this need. The future ratio will be 7.0 acres per 1,000 residents, an increase from the current ratio of 5.4 acres per 1,000 residents.

### GUIDING POLICY

- 6.5-G-1 Create and maintain a high-quality public park system for San Ramon.

### IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

- 6.5-I-1 Establish and maintain a standard of 6.5 acres of public parks per 1,000 residents, and public facilities to be within one-half mile of all homes with only usable acreage considered in meeting this standard.

*It is the City's intent to meet this criterion with functional acreage only. Private recreation facilities (such as golf courses and homeowners' association amenities including mini parks, tot-lots, and picnic areas) shall not be substituted for required parkland.*

- 6.5-I-2 Provide varied community park and recreational opportunities accessible to all City residents.

*It is the City's goal to ensure that parks in San Ramon are easily accessible to its citizens, including the physically disabled, and to provide recreational equipment that people of all ages and abilities can use.*

- 6.5-I-3 Establish a minimum size for neighborhood parks of two acres or more.

*Smaller parcels cannot accommodate recreational facilities that make neighborhood parks work.*

- 6.5-I-4 Provide passive and active elements within the City's parks to meet the needs of citizens of all ages and interests.

*While it is important to provide recreation facilities for athletics and team sports, it is equally important to develop natural settings for the enjoyment of passive activities, such as picnicking or walking.*

- 6.5-I-5 Require residential developers to make contributions to the City's park system.

*The City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance shall be applied to all residential development and shall be used to determine a developer's dedication of functional park acreage. In-lieu fees are required when suitable land is not available or desired for dedication. Such fees are intended to give the City flexibility to purchase parkland elsewhere in the City or to improve existing parks.*

- 6.5-I-6 Encourage contributions to the City's park system by non-residential developers.

*In addition to improving park facilities for its residents, it is the City's goal to provide active and passive parks for use by employees of San Ramon businesses. The park needs of this group can be partially met by encouraging contributions of parkland or funds from non-residential developers.*

- 6.5-I-7 Complete all parkland dedication requirements for each development prior to occupancy.

- 6.5-I-8 Encourage the development of landscaped and dedicated open spaces, parkways, trail systems, and special community service facilities in new developments.

*Trails or undevelopable portions of active parks shall not be included when calculating the City's park acreage standard.*

- 6.5-I-9 Cooperate with the San Ramon Valley Unified School District to promote joint development and use of school sites located within the City and its Sphere of Influence.

*Joint development and use of school sites is especially important in developed areas where park standards have not yet been achieved. This approach will help meet community needs for neighborhood parks during periods of parkland acquisition and development.*

- 6.5-I-10 Seek partnership opportunities with the private sector and with other public agencies to enhance park facilities and provide leisure time activities.

- 6.5-I-11 Identify, acquire, and preserve sites of historic interest.

- 6.5-I-12 Cooperate with the East Bay Regional Park District to further preserve open space, ridgelines, and corridors of scenic beauty in and around San Ramon.

*Within San Ramon's sphere of influence, the East Bay Regional Park District manages and maintains the Bishop Ranch Open Space, the Little Hills Recreation Area, and Las Trampas Regional Wilderness. San Ramon continues to work with the Park District to identify, preserve and develop additional areas for parks and open space of regional significance.*

- 6.5-I-13 Designate Big Canyon within the Westside subarea as a nature preserve and seek to add it to the City's park system as a specialized recreation area with limited access.
- 6.5-I-14 Adopt and implement a 10-year Parks and Community Services Master Plan to be reviewed biennially and updated quadrennially.

*The Parks and Community Services Commission implements the Master Plan, updates it biennially, and ensures that the development of parks and community facilities proceed as planned.*

- 6.5-I-15 Adopt a service level "A" of maintenance in all our parks and recreational facilities. The maintenance and upkeep of parks and recreational facilities is necessary for the economic health of the community as stated in San Ramon's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

